

EXHIBIT A

Hella and Franz Weigand

Germany

April 20th, 2021.

RE: Character letter for Ruben Weigand

To the honorable Judge Jed S. Rakoff,

We, that is Franz Weigand (69) and Hella Weigand (66), are Ruben's parents. We live in a small town in Germany, located between Frankfurt and Cologne. We have been married for 45 years and have five grown up children: Philipp (43), Annabel (41), Ruben (39), Natalie (36) and Quintus (27).

While I, Franz, have worked as a primary school teacher until my retirement, my wife has mainly been dedicated to raising our children, taking care our house and garden and of our many pets. Managing our finances has always been crucial in order to afford an education best suited for each of our children.

The German school system works a bit different from the one in the US. Basically, the most difficult and longest path takes almost 13 years until graduation, enabling the children who master this path to go on to university. Just like his siblings, Ruben went to this type of school ("Gymnasium") and graduated without much hassle and in the shortest time possible.

Early in life already, Ruben was keen on working and making his own money in order afford the things, he wanted to do or buy. He started his first business while still attending school, at only 15 years old: "Mobile Communications", selling mobile phones to friends and family, and soon getting referred new customers by word of mouth. This was back in the late nineties, when mobile phones were just about to get popular. He taught himself everything he needed to know to run the business, including for example the accounting part or how to file a tax declaration. He was very successful in his business because everyone valued him as a competent and professional consultant, even at his young age. He always had a fine sense of dealing with others, making sure that none of his grown-up customers ever had the feeling of being too slow or too old fashioned to use the new technology. He helped everyone just to the right extend, often times by helping to enter contacts or patiently practicing how to use the new phone.

We believe that this attentive and respectful way of dealing with others, honoring each relationship regardless of any differences, is one of Ruben's very special and strong suits.

Ruben has always played a central role in our family, from his early childhood on up until today.

He is not just the “middle child”, but also the center. We often rely on his vast and profound knowledge and ask for his opinion. His view and take on things means a lot to us.

Ruben has always been very social, making friends easily wherever he went. He made many friends in school and maintains a close relationship with many of them up until today. Another one of his strong suits is being a sensitive and trustworthy mediator - it has been our pleasure to watch him softening conflicts between his siblings from an early age on. He has maintained and strengthened this talent, always trying to find and create win-win solutions. He never acts in an opportunistic way and people trust him because of it.

Our family has always owned pets and all of our children grew up taking care of them and taking over responsibility. Currently, our two dogs have become quite old and have lost a bit of their youthful energy – however, they seem to forget that whenever Ruben shows up for a visit. His parrot “Nero”, who is living in a large aviary with his female companion “Nora”, starts blabbering all the words he knows when Ruben stops by and it usually does not take long before he sits on Ruben’s shoulder to enjoy each other’s company. Ruben got himself a job during school vacations to be able to afford buying his parrot in the mid-nineties. Nero was a pricey pet, which we could not have afforded – so Ruben went to work and earned the money by himself.

After graduating from school, Ruben joined the army and extended his commitment voluntarily. He felt that it was an important and worthy experience of duty and companionship. Getting to know comrades with various (social) backgrounds only broadened his view of the world. He is still in touch with friends he made during this time.

Ruben generally does not brag about anything and he does not tell us about all the things he does, but we know that he has always helped his friends in case they needed him. We are convinced that his friendly, helpful and considerate manner has brought him the success he has in life. These days, my wife and I postpone quite a few plans and decisions because we both agree, “Let’s wait until Ruben is back.”

We hope that these lines not only succeeded in expressing how much we miss him, but more importantly, that you were able to gain some insights of who Ruben really is, as well as his warm and caring character. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

We all hope and pray that these sad times without our Ruben are soon to be over.

Sincerely,



Franz Weigand



Hella Weigand